



Employer Guide to Work Experience

Work experience is an important way for young people to gain insight into the working world. Time spent with an employer can broaden young people's knowledge of industries and sectors, help inform and shape their career decisions, and offer a way in which to explore the workplace in a risk-free environment.

Why you should get involved

Work experience is vital to young people at school or college as they prepare to enter the labour market. It helps young people to make the transition from education into working life by giving them:

- first-hand experience of the workplace and an insight into jobs and sectors
- increased confidence and employability skills
- experience to build their CVs and access to networks
- an understanding of how recruitment works
- insight into how their skills and abilities translate to the workplace.

For employers, offering work experience is beneficial for several reasons, including:

- Recruitment opportunities and building talent pipelines: work experience placements enable employers to access a wider range of talent while also making a useful contribution to strategic talent management and workforce planning. 85% of employers that take young people on work experience placements use these as a recruitment channel and offer employment opportunities to young people afterward.
- Fresh ideas: young people offer creative new ideas and innovative ways of thinking, reflecting the interests and needs of the next generation of customers and consumers
- Staff development: offering work experience placements can provide opportunities for existing staff to supervise and mentor a young person, therefore helping to develop their management, professional and personal skills.
- More engaged workforce: providing work experience sends a positive message to the wider workforce about the values of the organisation.
- Engagement with the local community helps boost local economic development and can also lead to increased brand loyalty and profile, and in turn to greater profits

HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES MADE SIMPLE In the past work placement arrangements have sometimes been seen as over-bureaucratic. However, the Health and Safety Executive recently reviewed their guidance to make it easier and less burdensome for employers keen to offer work experience placements

LIABILITY INSURANCE COVERS PEOPLE ON WORK EXPERIENCE Individuals on work experience are now covered by the employer's existing employers' liability insurance policy, provided your insurer is a member of the Association of British Insurers or Lloyds.

EMPLOYERS CAN USE EXISTING ARRANGEMENTS FOR ASSESSMENTS AND MANAGEMENT OF RISKS TO YOUNG PEOPLE. Under health and safety law, work experience students are your employees. You treat them no differently to other young people you employ.

Furthermore, if employers have fewer than five employees they are not required to have a written risk assessment.

However, if you have not taken on a young person in the last few years or are taking on a work experience student for the first time, it's important to take care to identify the particular needs of the individual and review risk assessments before they start.

Discuss the placement in advance with organisers and take account of what they and the parents or carers tell you of the student's physical and psychological capacity and of any particular needs, for example due to any health conditions or learning difficulties

Keep any additional work in proportion to the environment:

- for placements in **low-risk environments**, such as offices or shops, **with everyday risks** that will mostly be familiar to the student, your existing arrangements for other employees should suffice.
- for **environments with risks less familiar** to the student (eg in light assembly or packing facilities), you will need to make arrangements to manage the risks. This will need to include induction, supervision, site familiarisation, and any protective equipment needed.
- for a placement in a **higher-risk environment** such as construction, agriculture and manufacturing you will need to consider what work the student will be doing or observing, the risks involved and how these are managed. Some **higher-risk environments**, need to consider specific factors that must be managed for young people, including exposure to radiation, noise and vibration, toxic substances, or extreme temperatures. Where these specific factors exist in your workplace, you should already have control measures in place. This will also apply to legally required age limits on the use of some equipment and machinery (eg forklift trucks and some woodworking machinery)

Consider what work the young person will be doing or observing, the risks involved and how these are managed and satisfy yourself that the instruction, training and supervisory arrangements have been properly thought through and that they work in practice

Finally - Check they know how to raise any health and safety concerns

INDUCTION: INTRODUCING A YOUNG PERSON TO THE WORKPLACE

Young people on work experience should receive an induction to the workplace that will help them to integrate quickly and learn about working life. Whether joining a large organisation or an SME, a young person entering the world of work for the first time may not know how it functions and how they should behave. The induction is an opportunity to:

- Get to know the young person
- Understand their previous experience
- Talk about the expectations on each side
- Establish the young person's goals
- Provide space for the young person to ask questions.

Therefore, a good induction should include:

- An introduction to the organisation, including how the company is structured, and the key people who the young person will have contact with.

- A tour of the facilities, any prohibited areas, where to get food from inside or outside your building, where the nearest toilets are, first aid facilities and accident reporting procedure, where the fire exits are situated and the evacuation procedure.
- Provides health and safety information and explains the risks and how they are controlled, checking that they understand what they have been told. Include safe systems of work, protective clothing requirements, dangerous substances, lifting & manual handling and any prohibited plant and machinery.
- A clear outline of what they will be doing during their time with you – A plan or schedule outlining what they will be doing each day, where they will be in the building and who they will be working with

It is important to give the young person a variety of tasks and if possible, rotate them between departments so they get a good insight into the workplace

SUPPORTING THE YOUNG PERSON: SUPERVISION AND MENTORING

NO DBS (FORMERLY CRB) IS REQUIRED FOR STAFF SUPERVISING YOUNG PEOPLE

AGED 16–17 The Disclosure and Barring Service, or DBS (formerly CRB), check is not compulsory for staff supervising participants aged 16–17. In the case of work experience, a DBS check will only be required if an employee's specific job purpose includes looking after under-16 work experience students.

Organisations should ensure there is a dedicated person with ring-fenced time in their work schedule to supervise the young person on work experience. This would be a good development opportunity for an employee who wants to develop their management capability.

- Be clear about how the young person will be supported, supervised and mentored during work experience.
- Assign a 'buddy' – this role is key to supporting a young person, therefore a buddy should be someone keen to do the role and who has a friendly, supportive manner
- Ensure the young person is introduced to the structure of working life, plan a schedule to help them see what they'll be doing each day.
- Where possible avoid being on your own in an isolated or closed environment with a young person

SAFEGUARDING CONCERN

A young person may disclose confidential information that gives rise to concern for their physical or emotional safety. In such situations you should immediately inform the young person's school. If for any reason you are unable to contact the school, please contact Worcestershire County Council Social Services team for further information

Social Services Access Centre (9am – 5.00pm) 01905 822666
Emergency Duty Team (outside office hours) 01905 768020

AT THE END OF THE PLACEMENT: REFERENCE and FEEDBACK

At the end of the work experience placement a meeting with the young person should take place to review how everything went, for both the person on work experience as well as the employer. The young person will have a Student Log Book which they must fill in during, and at the end of, their time with an employer. There will be space to write a comment and provide feedback which will be of real benefit to the young person and school career advisor.

We recommend that you assess the success of the placement and, if appropriate, offer further support to the individual by agreeing to act as a referee and encouraging the young person to stay in touch.

SAMPLE INDUCTION/HEALTH AND SAFETY CHECKLIST

	Signed
Introduction to the company provided	
Supervisor/Mentor identified	
A clear outline of work experience schedule provided	
Tour of work area and welfare facilities	
Action on discovering a fire explained	
Fire Warning system, means of escape demonstrated and assembly points	
Accident reporting procedures explained	
First Aid facilities and First Aiders identified	
Health and safety precautions identified e.g. chemical/electrical/mechanical what the student can and cannot do	
Any Risk Assessments explained	
Lifting and Handling techniques demonstrated	
Use of personal protective equipment (if required)	
What to do if they are not happy or have any concerns	

I have received and understood the instruction/training/Information as above

Name of student

Signature

Date

Name of Supervisor

Signature

Date